

**COMMITTEE TO REVIEW SUICIDE FATALITIES**  
**MINUTES**  
**September 23, 2014**  
**1:00 p.m.**

Division of Child & Family Services (DCFS)  
Children's Behavioral Services  
2655 Enterprise Road, Conference Room #1  
Reno, NV 89512

Toll-Free Dial Number  
(866) 434-5269

Conference Code  
7501044

Videoconference to:  
Division of Child & Family Services  
West Neighborhood Care Center  
6171 W. Charleston Blvd. #8,  
Conference Room A  
Las Vegas, NV 89146

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mike Bernstein, M. Ed. (Southern Nevada Health District)  
Dr. Lesley Dickson (Nevada Psychiatric Association)  
Coroner Michael Murphy (Clark County Coroner's Office)  
Dr. Melissa Piasecki (UNSOM)  
Heather Shoop (WestCare)

**BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Sgt. Annette Mullin, Co-Chair (Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department)  
Capt. Leslie Mays, Co-Chair (Nevada Air National Guard)

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELEPHONE CONFERENCE**

Joanne Libertelli (Spring Mountain Treatment Center)  
Senator Debbie Smith, District 13 – Sparks

**DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAFF PRESENT**

Beth Handler, Deputy Bureau Chief, Bureau of Child, Family & Community Wellness (BCFCW)  
Misty Allen, Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP), BCFCW  
Angela Friedman, OSP, BCFCW

**OTHER PRESENT VIA TELEPHONE CONFERENCE**

Sharon Benson, Senior Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General

Due to the absence of the Co-Chairs and at the direction of Sharon Benson, Misty Allen asked if one of the members would like to volunteer to chair the meeting. With the approval of the members, Ms. Allen chaired the meeting as Staff to the Committee.

Ms. Allen called the meeting of the Committee to Review Suicide Fatalities to order at 1:03 PM. The meeting was properly posted at the locations listed on the agenda in accordance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law (OML).

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Roll call was taken and it was determined a quorum of the Committee to Review Suicide Fatalities was present.

Ms. Allen explained due to the recent King Fire and high temperatures, and with the unexpected lack of air conditioning, it was feared the Reno meeting location would be a health concern. Therefore, the location was not prepared for a videoconference. (Members were notified in advance of the meeting.) Some members met as a group in Las Vegas, Dr. Melissa Piasecki, bearing the conditions, attended at the Reno location, and the other members attended by teleconference from their preferred locations.

**2. Vote on minutes from the June 3, 2014 Committee to Review Suicide Fatalities meeting**

Ms. Allen asked whether there were any corrections to the draft open session minutes from the June 3, 2014 meeting.

There were no changes.

**MISTY ALLEN ENTERTAINED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE OPEN SESSION MINUTES OF THE JUNE 3, 2014 MEETING. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY SENATOR DEBBIE SMITH. MIKE MURPHY SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT PUBLIC COMMENT.**

Ms. Allen asked whether there were any corrections to the draft closed session minutes from the June 3, 2014 meeting. Heather Shoop questioned the numbering of the agenda items. Ms. Allen explained they were correctly continued from the open meeting agenda.

There were no changes.

**MISTY ALLEN ENTERTAINED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE CLOSED SESSION. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY MIKE BERNSTEIN. HEATHER SHOOP SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT PUBLIC COMMENT.**

Dr. Piasecki noted the Reno location was without handouts because the Reno location was not expecting attendees. Angela Friedman contacted the location to provide the handouts.

**3. REVIEW AND APPROVE THE UPDATED DATA COLLECTION TOOL**

Ms. Allen explained Richard Egan was on the road and was expected to call in. Agenda Item 3 was postponed to allow time for Mr. Egan to participate.

**4. REVIEW AND APPROVE DRAFT OF ANNUAL REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Ms. Allen asked for the committee's comments or edits of the Draft Process Report for Year 1. Coroner Murphy felt the report was sufficient but may need revision after a year or so to address other issues. Ms. Allen asked if a second face to face meeting to create a second report to be submitted in April would be appropriate or feasible.

Ms. Shoop noted in Section III on page two, "Westcare" in the list of committee members should read "WestCare."

Because at the time Dr. Piasecki did not have the report, Sharon Benson noted communication on edits of the report between Ms. Allen and Dr. Piasecki may occur in emails but the final approval needs to be made during an open meeting.

Ms. Shoop's comments about a conversation earlier that day will be heard as public comment after review of the report.

Ms. Allen suggested the data collection tool continue to be a draft and reminded the members of a past discussion to try the tool in the rural communities with the concerns in Northern Nevada.

Dr. Piasecki noted a small error of the word "of" in Section 8 of the data collection tool.

Dr. Piasecki only had the collection tool so Ms. Allen returned to Agenda Item 3 for discussion.

### **3. REVIEW AND APPROVE THE UPDATED DATA COLLECTION TOOL**

After postponement, Ms. Allen returned the focus of the meeting to Agenda Item 3.

Ms. Allen noted that edits from the June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and emailed corrections from Dr. Piasecki were made to the document.

Ms. Shoop questioned the clarity of Section 15 referencing eligibility or services received. Ms. Allen suggested this may have been added because of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) eligibility discrepancies. Coroner Murphy noted the change should reflect the questions, "Were they eligible?" and "Did they receive services?"

Ms. Shoop reported WestCare was chosen to participate in an academy created by the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. Through a listserv email Ms. Shoop shared the content of AB29 with the Alliance. Ms. Shoop shared her conversation with Richard McKean, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). He said AB29 uses the strongest language he's seen in the development of a suicide fatality review committee. He gave praise for the good work being done. He suggested reviewing the cases of those who had received behavioral health services. Ms. Shoop noted hospital or residential cases could provide that data, but outpatient services would need further investigation. She reported Mr. McKean said 30-50% of people who committed suicide were receiving behavioral health services at time of death.

Mr. Bernstein noted a study of senior suicides where the majority had received behavioral health services. Ms. Shoop suggested a section similar to Section 12 of the report be created for behavioral health information. Coroner Murphy agreed this would add clarity to the tool since the majority of suicide fatalities visited a health care provider within a month or two of the act. Coroner Murphy believed the person completing the form will need to be thorough in questioning. Dr. Joanne Libertelli suggested Section 12 should read "Recent Medical Health Care Involvement" to avoid overlap.

Dr. Lesley Dickson asked, considering the elderly, if this section would be computer generated and expandable, or in printed form. Ms. Allen believes the intent, with approval of the committee, would be to have an electronic database to allow flexibility for input of data. Dr. Dickson suggested if not a database than an addendum similar to Section 18 could be added for additional medication

or other data. Coroner Murphy expressed the need to have both questions in Section 12 to allow for definitive quick answers, such as a list of prescriptions, and sections for narrative. Coroner Murphy and Mr. Bernstein discussed adding addendums referring back to Section 12 or allowing for an expanding computer field.

Ms. Shoop suggested using a web based tool to extract data for reporting purposes. Ms. Allen said Rick Egan would have more information and ideas on the software to consider for this purpose. Ms. Shoop will provide contact information on a software company which worked with the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and WestCare. Coroner Murphy wanted to stress the forced use of drop downs or check boxes allow for complete and consistent data. Ms. Allen suggested working toward a future meeting to possibly test and note a web based tool.

Coroner Murphy noted an error of "0" in the first section under age. He believes it is a very good tool and believes they should move forward soon to collecting data.

Ms. Shoop noted in Section 10, it should say "college" not "collage."

Dr. Piasecki questioned whether under Section 12, "Doctors Visits" should have an apostrophe and under Section 17, there is an extra "a" in legal.

Dr. Piasecki questioned the use of "Bridge (River)." The members discussed the differences between the jumping suicides and how to accurately denote these on the tool. The members decided the word "River" would be replaced by "water," and "pedestrian" would be added to "Overpass Car/Train."

Dr. Dickson noted the number error on the last page of "13" which should be "19."

The members discussed the title of the document and determined it should be called "Suicide Event Review Presentation/Data Collection Tool." Ms. Allen said the edits will be made and the tool with corrections redistributed for a final review.

Dr. Dickson questioned the purpose of Section 6. The members discussed Section 6 and determined the question should be separated "Children" and "Siblings" to ensure capturing data of a parent who is also a sibling, and children who have siblings.

Dr. Piasecki questioned the use of "interment" in Section 17. Senator Debbie Smith offered the word should be "instrument." The committee agreed.

There was no public comment.

#### **4. REVIEW AND APPROVE DRAFT OF ANNUAL REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Ms. Allen continued with Agenda Item 4.

(Dr. Piasecki received the handouts for the meeting.)

Ms. Allen will correct the numbering of Section VII.

Ms. Allen asked if the Committee would like a presentation at a future date from her contact at the VA who performs psychological autopsies on veteran suicides in Washoe County. Dr. Piasecki stated it would provide a review of the contact's methodology and her findings. Ms. Allen will discuss a presentation with the contact's supervisor. Coroner Murphy stated he can pull data on veterans when the parameters are decided.

Ms. Allen asked about visitor suicides in year two. Mr. Bernstein felt the research of residential suicides should be a higher priority as less than 10% are visitor suicides. Coroner Murphy suggested moving visitor suicide review to year 3. He noted a study conducted a few years ago stating most visitor suicides came to Las Vegas with the intent to commit suicide. Mr. Bernstein noted a study showing Las Vegas as one of the top three or five popular locations to commit suicide. Mr. Bernstein would like the last sentence to qualify that the initial challenge is data collection of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Questioning (LGBTQ) and veterans and in the future visitors of Nevada.

Dr. Piasecki asked if the study noted by Coroner Murphy had been published. Coroner Murphy explained the study originally tried to prove the suicides were related to gambling loss, but that wasn't the case. The study was published by the Las Vegas Review Journal (RJ) about five or six years ago. Mr. Bernstein noted another published study in the RJ and the Sun proved other circumstances, not solely gambling loss led to suicide.

No public comment was heard.

**MISTY ALLEN ENTERTAINED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DRAFT PROCESS REPORT FOR YEAR 1 WITH CORRECTIONS. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY HEATHER SHOOP. LESLEY DICKSON SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT PUBLIC COMMENT.**

## **5. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF SCRIPT FOR CORONER INVESTIGATORS**

Ms. Allen reported she was unable to move forward as her plan to work with the Suicide Prevention Specialist from the VA did not occur. Coroner Murphy agreed this agenda item would be tabled until the next meeting. He will have his investigators review the script. He will email his standard investigative report to Ms. Allen. Ms. Allen noted the VA's Suicide Prevention Specialist's vast experience and approach has allowed her to interview the families without difficulty.

No public comment was heard.

## **6. SELECTION OF DATE FOR NEXT MEETING AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS**

Ms. Allen recalled the discussion of the possibility of a set calendar of meetings. Coroner Murphy said with the upcoming Legislative Session it would be best to set subsequent meetings at the end of each meeting. The committee determined to meet for face to face reviews on Friday, February 6, 2015 in Reno and on Friday, June 19, 2014 in Las Vegas. Ms. Allen explained the budget will allow for flights and overnight stays. Ms. Friedman will be in contact with the members for travel arrangements.

Ms. Allen clarified the agenda will include:

- A. Coroner's script
- B. Suicide Event Review Presentation/Data Collection tool
- C. Mr. Egan and Coroner Murphy on face to face data

- D. VA for a presentation on veterans suicides
- E. Jay Kvam for face to face data

The members determined to meet by phone conference on Friday, November 21, 2014 from 1 – 3 PM.

**MISTY ALLEN ENTERTAINED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CURRENT CALENDAR AS SET. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY MIKE MURPHY. HEATHER SHOOP SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT PUBLIC COMMENT.**

**7. Public Comment**

No public was present.

**8. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:09 PM